Job shadowing can be a great way to expand your network and get a real-world glimpse of a specific role, work environment or field. This can help you make decisions regarding your coursework and career path.

Job shadowing is following— or “shadowing”—a practicing professional as they go through their workday to help get a sense of that professional’s role or field. It’s typically short in duration, ranging from a day to a week, and can be set up as part of a formal program or arranged independently.

**Benefits of shadowing**

**EXPLORE**
Job shadowing offers a low investment way to explore different career functions and types of work spaces. Shadowing someone in a specific role will give you an idea of the other roles that are part of that industry.

**EXPERIENCE**
During a job shadow, you get to experience the day-to-day of a specific job through observation; you’ll get first-hand experience with the pace and activities of a person operating in a job field that interests you.

**EXPAND**
Job shadowing expands your network and helps you connect to professionals. When it comes time to find an internship or get advice on your resume and cover letter, you can reach out to your job shadow hosts for advice!

**TYPES OF SHADOWING**
There are two types of job shadowing: **formal** and **informal**. Formal job shadowing is set up as part of a program such as DePaul’s Job Shadow Program, a one-day learning opportunity for undergraduate students offered over Winter Intersession and other points during the academic year. You can also pursue job shadowing opportunities by tapping your own network, including friends, families, professional contacts and DePaul alumni in the field. For the latter, DePaul’s Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) network can be a good place to start.
How to get started

1. Connect with your existing network (family, faculty, peers, etc.) to get the contact information or referrals for people who work in your field of interest.

2. Login to DePaul’s Alumni Sharing Knowledge program to search for alumni and look for the “job shadowing” label in the “HOW I CAN HELP” section of their profile or just filter by “Job Shadowing.” You can send a message directly from their profile!

3. Search for DePaul alumni on LinkedIn, and try to determine their work email address.

4. Use the sample email/letter for your initial contact. Be gently persistent—send a follow-up note if you do not receive a reply within two weeks.

Make the most of the experience!

CONFIRM THE DETAILS
Be clear on whom you’re shadowing, their location and what time to arrive. Ask about attire, and err on the side of overdressing.

BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT YOURSELF
Why did you choose this company and individual to shadow? What’s your career direction? What do you see as your strengths?

MEET PEOPLE
Talk to as many people as you can during the shadow. Don’t be afraid to ask for a business card after a good conversation.

TAKE NOTES
How do people conduct meetings or conference calls? How does the person you shadow keep track of details or manage tasks? Make note of terms and expressions used.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK
Visit the company website and the LinkedIn page of the person you’re shadowing to see how they describe their responsibilities. Jot down questions.

SEND A NOTE OF THANKS
Be sure to write a thank-you note to the person you shadowed within a day or two of the experience.